

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT, FONSI AND DECISION RECORD**  
**BLM, Bishop Field Office**  
**351 Pacu Lane, Suite 100**  
**Bishop, CA 93514**

**EA Number:** CA-170-04-47

**Lease/Serial/Case File No.:** 8366-Pleasant Valley (the Pit) Campground Casefile

**Proposed Action Title/Type:** Pleasant Valley Pit Vault Toilet Facility Installation

**Location of Proposed Action:** T.6.S., R.32 E., Section 30 SW1/2 NW1/4

**Plan Conformance:** The proposed action is subject to the Bishop Resource Management Plan, approved March 25 1993. The proposed action has been reviewed and is in conformance with the plan.

**Need for Proposed Action:** Federal and local agencies are working together to manage the cultural and ecological resources of the Owens Valley by providing appropriate camping for the many climbers that recreate in the Bishop area during the winter months. The Pleasant Valley Pit Campground, located in an infrequently used mineral materials site (borrow pit) for surface mining, was developed in 1999 as the preferred central overnight camping and staging area for climbers as an alternative to camping and creating adverse impacts to the fragile desert landscapes of the Volcanic Tablelands and Buttermilk areas. Camping sites were developed within the pit using river rock to define the individual sites.

With use increasing every year since the creation of the campground (4,000 visitors in 1999; 19,000 visitors in 2003) the BLM has found the service cost of portable toilets substantial. The Pleasant Valley Pit currently has 3-4 portable toilets during the open season (November through May) which require pumping weekly. The BLM is looking at more efficient use of the limited dollars available to the agency for campground maintenance and services. Installation of a vault toilet would be more cost effective compared to continuing portable toilet rentals and provide greater service to the public, as well as continued protection of adjacent resources.

**Description of Proposed Action:** Installation of a double unit CXT prefabricated toilet facility within the Pleasant Valley Pit. Action would require shallow excavation of a hole (approx 5 feet deep). Dimensions of the actual finished toilet building would be 14 ½ feet wide by 12 feet deep by 16½ feet tall. Material would be removed with a standard backhoe; the ground would then be compacted and a 2" layer of sand added to level the building. Backfilling and compaction around the vault would occur once the installation was completed. All materials used would be obtained on site, with the exception of a two inch layer of sand which would be purchased from a local contractor. A BLM monitor would oversee the project and be present during the actual toilet installation. The toilet could easily be removed at any time in the future, if conditions warrant.

**Affected Environment/Environmental Impacts:**

The site has experienced significant disturbance for many years as an active borrow permit for surface mining materials. No new surface disturbance would be approved outside of the area already identified as the perimeter of the Pit. A USFS Civil Engineer surveyed the site for potential visual contrasts as well as proper placement of the toilet facility with regards to geography and air flow.

The proposed project was reviewed by Bishop Field Office Archaeologist, Kirk Halford. A site visit was conducted to ensure the facility would be placed within the previously disturbed area of the gravel pit. The project would occur within a highly disturbed mineral material pit and has been determined to qualify as an exempt undertaking pursuant to the State Protocol Agreement (1998), Appendix B(1) and no further cultural resource evaluation is required. There would be no effect to any actual or potential National Register properties as a result of the proposed undertaking.

Air quality would not be affected. The proposed action is within the Mono Basin/Owens Valley federal no attainment area. The action would not result in the emission of PM<sub>10</sub>.

The proposed action is not within a Wilderness, Wilderness Study Area, Area of Critical Environmental Concern, nor Wild and Scenic River corridor, and there would be no effects on any lands so designated.

There are no known listed or sensitive species or habitats within the proposed action area.

The VRM Class III standard designation for the area would conform with the partial retention of the existing character of the landscape. The proposed vault toilet installation would naturally blend in more effectively than previously used rental porta-potties, because of their earth tone color and cobblestone texture.

The Pleasant Valley Minerals site is a borrow pit with reoccurring disturbance, thus dispersal of non-native weed seed from outside the project area is always a risk. Materials that would be used for this project would be taken from on site. Appropriate equipment cleaning standards would be adhered to for any equipment utilized in the project to prevent the spread of invasive, non-native species. Any heavy equipment used to install the toilets would require "weed washing" before project implementation.

The proposed action would not adversely affect any claim holders or mining interests within Pleasant Valley Pit. The pit could continue to be utilized for surface mining of materials, under BLM regulation and authority.

This proposed action is not expected to contribute to any impacts cumulatively concerning the effected resources identified in this environmental assessment because of its location, magnitude of impact and design.

**Public Comments:**

Bishop Field Office issued a press release dated July 15, 2004, requesting comments on the Proposed Action. The News Release was posted on the California BLM web site.

The Bishop Field Office received one letter and one phone call in response to the scoping. Both were supportive of the vault toilet installation, although one comment noted a concern regarding the location of the campground itself.

The Access Fund, a climbing access organization, has expressed and provided support for toilet services in the PV Pit since it's inception in 1999.

**Persons/Agencies Consulted:**

Melissa Totheroh, Inyo National Forest Civil Engineer

Linda Arcularius, Inyo County Supervisor

Jeff Yanez, BLM Maintenance Coordinator

Steve Nelson, BLM Wildlife Biologist

Anna Halford, BLM Botanist

Kirk Halford, BLM Archaeologist

Interagency Bouldering Committee (LADWP, USFS, BLM, Inyo County, public)

**Preparer(s):**

Diana Pietrasanta, Outdoor Recreation Planner

**Date:** August 31, 2004

Reviewed By: /s/ Joe Pollini

**Date:** 8/31/04

**Environmental Coordinator**

## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT/DECISION RECORD**

I have reviewed this environmental assessment including the explanation and resolution of any potentially significant environmental impacts. I have determined that the proposed action will not have any significant impacts on the human environment and that an EIS is not required.

There will be no effect on threatened or endangered species as a result of the action.

I have determined that the proposed project is in conformance with the Bishop Resource Management Plan, which was approved March 25, 1993. This plan has been reviewed, and the proposed action conforms with the land use plan terms and conditions as required by 43 CFR 1610.5.

It is my decision to install a double unit CXT toilet facility at the Pleasant Valley Pit Campground. It is in the public's interest to install the toilet facility. It will provide a higher quality service to campers and reduce impacts to the surrounding Volcanic Tablelands by focusing camping in the Pit. It enables the BLM more efficient use of limited dollars available to the agency for campground maintenance services.

It is my decision to implement the project as described in this environmental assessment.

**Mitigation Measures/Remarks:** n/a

**Authorized Official:** /s/ Bill Dunkelberger  
**Field Office Manager**

**Date:** 9/2/04